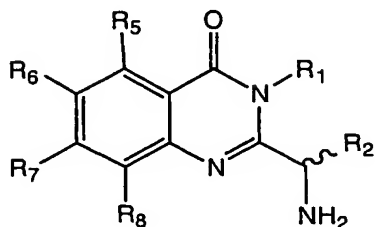


What is claimed is

1. A method for the racemization of an enantiomer, or an enantiomerically enriched mixture of a compound of formula,



Formula I

wherein said method comprises the steps of:

contacting said compound with an alkali alkoxide of a C₁ – C₆ primary alcohol; and
isolating the resulting racemic compound, wherein

R₁ is chosen from hydrogen, alkyl, aryl, aralkyl, heteroaryl, heteroaralkyl, substituted alkyl, substituted aryl, substituted aralkyl, substituted heteroaryl, and substituted heteroaralkyl;

R₂ is alkyl, oxaalkyl, aryl, aralkyl, heteroaryl, heteroaralkyl, substituted alkyl, substituted aryl, substituted aralkyl, substituted heteroaryl, and substituted heteroaralkyl; and

R₅, R₆, R₇ and R₈ are independently chosen from hydrogen, alkyl, alkoxy, halogen, fluoroalkyl, nitro, dialkylamino, alkylsulfonyl, alkylsulfonamido, sulfonamidoalkyl, sulfonamidoaryl, alkylthio, carboxyalkyl, carboxamido, aminocarbonyl, aryl and heteroaryl.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the C₁ – C₆ primary alcohol is methanol or ethanol.
3. The method of claim 2, wherein the C₁ – C₆ primary alcohol is ethanol.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the alkali alkoxide is a sodium or potassium alkoxide.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein the alkali alkoxide of a C₁ – C₆ primary alcohol is sodium ethoxide.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein the racemization reaction temperature is less than

200°C.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the racemization reaction temperature is less than 100°C.
8. The method of claim 1, wherein the racemization reaction temperature is at the boiling point of the reaction mixture.
9. The method of claim 1, wherein after the compound is contacted with the alkali alkoxide of a C₁ – C₆ primary alcohol, the method further comprises the step of hydrolysing the resulting material by treatment with dilute acid.
10. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of subjecting the product obtained by racemization to optical resolution to obtain a pure enantiomer of the compound of Formula II.
11. The method of claim 10, further comprising the step of converting the product obtained by racemization to a compound of Formula I(a), I(b), I(c) or I(d).
12. The method of claim 1, wherein the enantiomer has an R-configuration.
13. The method of claim 1, wherein the enantiomer has an S-configuration.